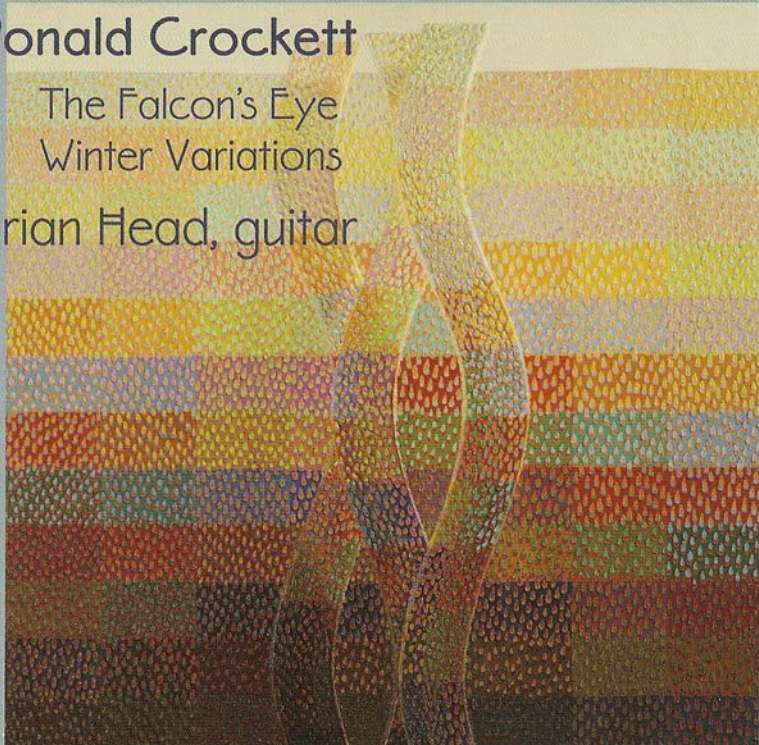
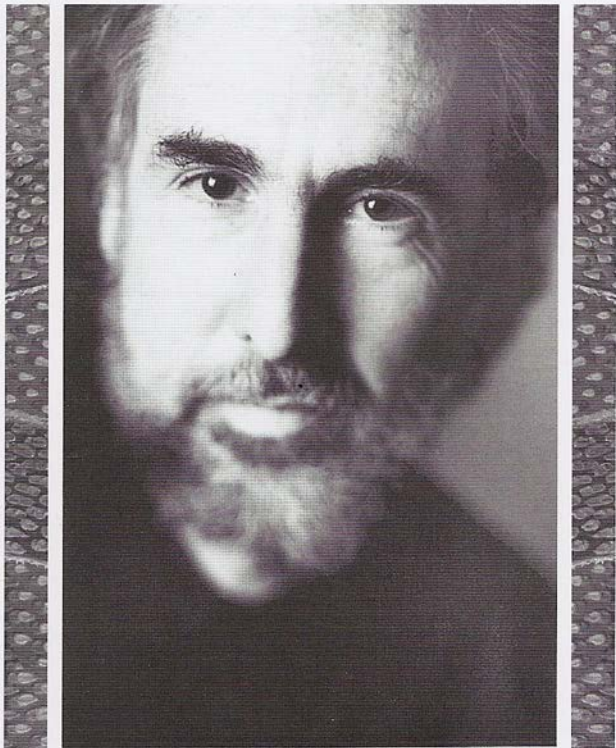


Donald Crockett

The Falcon's Eye  
Winter Variations

Brian Head, guitar





Composer/conductor **DONALD CROCKETT** was born in Pasadena, California in 1951. After composition studies with American composers Robert Linn, Halsey Stevens and Edward Applebaum, and British composers Peter Racine Fricker and Humphrey Searle at the University of Southern California (BM Magna cum Laude 1974, MM 1976) and UC Santa Barbara (PhD 1981), he joined the faculty of the USC Thornton School of Music in 1981. He has received commissions from the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (Composer-in-Residence 1991-97), Pasadena Chamber Orchestra (Composer-in-Residence 1984-86), Kronos Quartet, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Stanford String Quartet, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Charlotte Symphony, Music from Angel Fire, the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East, Pacific Serenades, and the California EAR Unit, among many others. Recent projects include

commissions from the Hilliard Ensemble, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and a work for piano and orchestra commissioned by the University of Southern California for its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. His music has also been widely performed by ensembles including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Collage, Xtet and the Arditti Quartet, at the Tanglewood, Aspen and Piccolo Spoleto festivals, and by artists including violinists Michelle Makarski and Ida Kavafian, mezzo soprano Janice Felty, oboist Allan Vogel, pianist Vicki Ray, percussionist Lynn Vartan, and conductors Jorge Mester, JoAnn Falletta, Hugh Wolff, Sergiu Comissiona, Jeffrey Kahane and Christof Perick. Donald Crockett was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2006, and has also received the Goddard Lieberman Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a commission from the Barlow

Endowment, an Artist Fellowship from the California Arts Council, an Aaron Copland Award and the first Sylvia Goldstein Award from the Copland House, a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, as well as grants and awards from the American Music Center, BMI, Bogliasco Foundation, Composers Inc., the Copland Fund, Meet the Composer and the National Endowment for the Arts. His music is published by MMB Music, St. Louis and Doberman-Yppan, Quebec, and recorded on the Albany, CRI, ECM, Laurel, Orion and Pro Arte/Fanfare labels.

Also active as a conductor of new music, Donald Crockett has presented many world, national and regional premieres with the Los Angeles-based new music ensemble Xtet, the USC Thornton

Contemporary Music Ensemble, and as a guest conductor with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Hilliard Ensemble, California EAR Unit and the USC Thornton Symphony. His recordings as a conductor can be found on the ECM, New World and CRI labels.

Donald Crockett is currently Chair of the Composition Department and Director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, and Senior Composer-in-Residence with the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East.

## Program Notes

The guitar and the voice (I'm a tenor) have been my principal instruments, supplanting at a fairly early age the piano which I began, under the tutelage of my mother, at age four. I share with many a love of the guitar's intimacy of expression, its very personal quality. Still, it is surprising to me that—while I have used the guitar in a few chamber and vocal works—it took until my late-forties to begin composing this pair of extended solo pieces for the instrument. The encouragement of two of my colleagues at the USC Thornton School of Music, guitarists Brian Head and James Smith, was far from incidental, and I appreciate their persistence as well as their artistry on this most expressive and delicately thunderous instrument.

You could say, then, that *The Falcon's Eye* (1999-2000) began as a rediscovery after more than twenty years of my own guitar playing. Though I play these pieces (in private) with varying degrees of success, I have enjoyed the process of learning them nearly as much as the process of composing them. The titles are small fragments of poetry which evoked for me something essential about each of the preludes. The poems from which the fragments come were created by Czeslaw Milosz, Michael Ondaatje, Theodore Roethke, Robinson Jeffers, Linda Gregg, Rolf Jacobsen, Wang Wei and Franz Wright. In case you are wondering, I composed the music first and then searched among the forty or so fragments that I had collected for an especially resonant fit.

A number of my pieces get their titles that way, except I usually choose the title first and compose the music 'to' it instead of the other way around. The preludes can of course be done as a complete set lasting about forty minutes, or one of many possible subsets of the guitarist's own devising could be performed instead.

I composed *Winter Variations* (2006) as a complement to the twelve preludes which comprise *The Falcon's Eye*. *Winter Variations*, by contrast, is cast in a single movement lasting about twenty minutes. The inspiration for the piece has two layers: first, it is an extended response to one particular prelude in *The Falcon's Eye* entitled *Bells in Winter*. The bells are represented by a number of natural harmonics, and a rather lonely melodic idea is prominent. In *Winter Variations* the actual bells are different—a set of three widely spaced chords which first appear in measure 48—and the brief melody used as a theme is different as well. Still, the piece feels to me like an extended soliloquy on that prelude, and to a certain extent on the entire set of preludes in *The Falcon's Eye*. Acknowledgement of the second layer of inspiration is in the titles of both pieces. There is a poem called *Encounter* in Czeslaw Milosz's book of poems called *Bells in Winter*. Both titles, of the prelude and the variations, pay homage to this book of poems. The feel of the poem *Encounter*—its tone, mood, landscape, language—also affect both pieces, as well as an earlier work I composed for orchestra called *Antiphonies*. Here is the poem:



*Encounter*  
by Czeslaw Milosz

*We were riding through frozen fields in a wagon at dawn.  
A red wing rose in the darkness.*

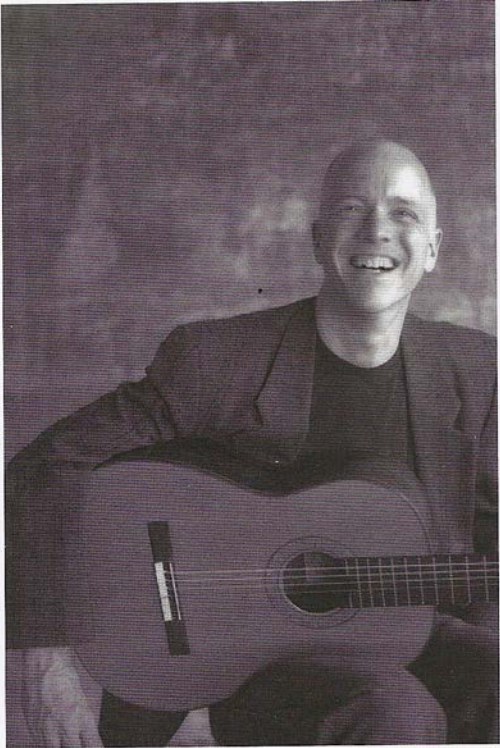
*And suddenly a hare ran across the road.  
One of us pointed to it with his hand.*

*That was long ago. Today neither of them is alive,  
Not the hare, nor the man who made the gesture.*

*O my love, where are they, where are they going  
The flash of a hand, streak of movement, rustle of pebbles.  
I ask not out of sorrow, but in wonder.*

Winter Variations was completed in the winter of 2006  
and is dedicated to Brian Head.

—Donald Crockett





**BRIAN HEAD** enjoys a vibrant, frequently frenetic career as a guitarist, teacher, and composer, performing as a soloist and collaboratively with many groups including the Los Angeles Philharmonic and their New Music Group, the New World Symphony, Le Rossignol, Inauthentica, Jacaranda and Xtet. In the years leading up to the release of this recording he has been involved in a number of diverse musical projects including performing new music with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in works by Osvaldo Golijov, Louis Andriessen and John Adams, recording classic rock as a lutenist with the renaissance band, The Misty Mountaineers, and producing a series of arrangements of chamber music for both the 6-string and 8-string guitars. In 2003, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, he was a co-soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the premiere of William Kraft's

*Grand Encounter Concerto* for English Horn under the baton of Esa-Pekka Salonen, and in 2005 he appeared at Disney Hall as soloist in the Art of the Guitar Festival. He has premiered and recorded works by numerous composers including Donald Crockett, Tamar Diesendruck, Stephen Hartke, William Kraft, Frederick Lesemann, Steve Reich and Ron L. Warren, and his own compositions have been performed for many years throughout the U.S. in venues including Merkin Hall in New York, the Ambassador Auditorium in Los Angeles, and the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and abroad in such cities as Tokyo, Berlin, Madrid, Mexico City, Montreal, Sao Paulo, and Dubai. One of his recent pieces, an homage to John McLaughlin called *We Know You Know*, was part of the 2005 Grammy Award-winning *Guitar Heroes* album by the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet. Brian holds a dual appointment



on the Classical Guitar and Composition faculties at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California where he maintains an active guitar studio and lectures on a wide array of topics. He previously led the classical guitar program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and is currently president of the Guitar Foundation of America.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND PRODUCTION NOTES

The composer wishes to thank the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for its support of this recording project.

*The Falcon's Eye* and *Winter Variations* are published by Doberman-Yppan. All selections SOCAN.

Producers: Donald Crockett and Brian Head

Recording Engineer: Scott Sedillo

Editing: Steve Kaplan and Scott Sedillo

Mastering: Scott Sedillo

Photography of Brian Head: Paul Viapiano

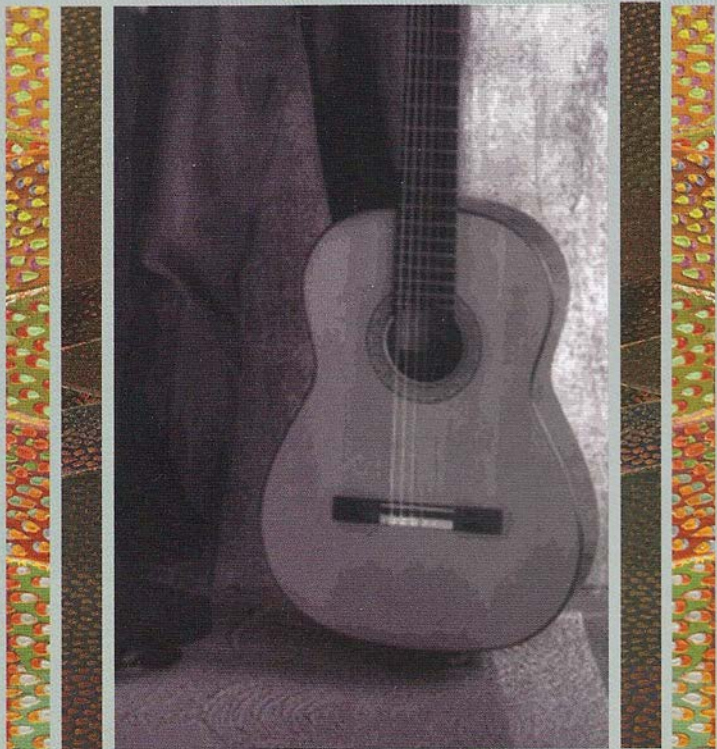
Graphic Design: Colleen Gates

*The Falcon's Eye* production notes:

Recorded at Alfred Newman Recital Hall,  
University of Southern California, Los Angeles,  
December 13-15, 2002

*Winter Variations* production notes:

Recorded at Alfred Newman Recital Hall,  
University of Southern California, Los Angeles,  
July 21-22, 2006



## The Falcon's Eye

### 12 Preludes

1	I	Guiding the Minotaur	1:29
2	II	Sonorous Pagodas	3:52
3	III	Under Violets	2:35
4	IV	Scatter the Ashes	1:18
5	V	Bells in Winter	4:32
6	VI	Flint	2:24
7	VII	The Weapons of a Goddess	5:08
8	VIII	Scarab	3:38
9	IX	The Falcon's Eye	3:28
10	X	Night Music	2:54
11	XI	That Clear Autumnal Weather of Eternity	3:33
12	XII	Broken Mirror	3:01

### Winter Variations

13	(measure 1)	3:56
14	(measure 78)	2:38
15	(measure 155)	3:31
16	(measure 253)	3:06
17	(measure 306)	2:23
18	(measure 400)	4:00
Total Timing		57:38



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*Circle of Fifths*, Nancy Mooslin, 1990.

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